

Cancer Consortium

A PERIODIC UPDATE OF PROGRESS AND EVENTS



Professor Donal Hollywood (Ireland) welcomed NIH Director Dr. Elias Zerhouni and NCI Director Dr. Andrew von Eschenbach to the TELESYNERGY® demonstration in Dublin.

TELESYNERGY® Aims to Improve Cancer Research and Care Collaboration

On 13 November 2002, TELESYNERGY®, a state-of-the-art telemedicine system, was demonstrated in a three-way conference between Cancer Centres in Dublin and Belfast and the National Cancer Institute (NCI). Dignitaries invited to attend the demonstration at St. Luke's Hospital in Dublin included U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services Tommy Thompson, National Institutes of Health (NIH) Director Dr. Elias Zerhouni, and NCI Director Andrew von Eschenbach.

TELESYNERGY®, developed by NIH, allows seamless, simultaneous transmissions of medical data and images and promotes collaboration between U.S. and island cancer specialists and clinicians by enabling interaction at multiple locations. The system was recently used in the diagnosis and treatment of a Northern Irish patient with a rare form of leukaemia.

Available at selected sites on the island and in the U.S., TELESYNERGY® provides high-resolution image displays in both "real-time" and "store-and-forward" modes through the use of a combination of cameras, microscopes, audio equipment, and other peripheral devices. This system represents a marked improvement over standard videoconferencing technologies through better resolution imagery and elimination of delays in communication. It offers the added benefit of minimizing travel costs and time for patients and care providers and facilitates education, training, and consultation in cancer research protocols and patient care. The technology also helps strengthen national and international expertise in cancer research and treatment by enhancing the

adoption of uniform standards of care.

TELESYNERGY® has many potential collaborative and varied uses, including clinical case conferences, grand rounds, expert case review, multi-center radiotherapy planning, and patient screening for clinical trials. The system can also be used to enhance distance learning and seminars, and allows for high-quality diagnostic radiology and pathology image transmission and for discussion and remote manipulation of biopsy specimens.

The newly formed TELESYNERGY® Users Group met in Bethesda, Maryland, January 30-31, 2003, to share their experiences with the system and explore potential applications. The Users Group includes representatives from Northern Ireland, Ireland, and TELESYNERGY® sites in the United States. Present at this meeting were representatives from St. Luke's Hospital (Dublin) and Belfast City Hospital (Belfast) and from two U.S. hospitals (Wheeling Hospital, Wheeling, WVA, and Holy Cross Hospital, Fort Lauderdale, FL).



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Ireland



Department of Health,
Social Services and Public Safety
Northern Ireland



National Institutes of Health
Department of Health and Human Services
United States

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Director, National Cancer Institute, Bethesda, Maryland USA

Implementation Group

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Dr. Harry Comber, Director, National Cancer Registry, Cork

Professor Donal Hollywood, Professor of Clinical Oncology, Trinity College Dublin

Dr. Mary Hynes, Regional Manager Acute Services, Western Health Board, Galway

Professor Mark Lawler, Associate Professor of Experimental Hematology, Department of Hematology and Institute for Molecular Medicine, St James's Hospital and Trinity College, Dublin/Chief Molecular Geneticist and Director, Cancer Molecular Diagnostics Laboratory, St James's Hospital, Dublin

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Dr. Douglas Weed, Chief, Office of Preventive Oncology, NCI

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Cancer Registries

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Clinical Trials

Dr. Ruth Barrington, Chief Executive, Health Research Board, Dublin

Information Technology

Professor Donal Hollywood, Professor of Clinical Oncology, Trinity College Dublin

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Prevention

Dr. Douglas Weed, Chief, Office of Preventive Oncology, NCI

Scholar Exchange

Professor Patrick Johnston, Director, Cancer Research Centre, The Queen's University Belfast, Belfast City Hospital, Belfast

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"One of the initial areas of clinical investigation to utilize the technology within TELESYNERGY® will be a joint U.S.-Ireland study of the clinical, molecular and genetic factors that predetermine patient sensitivity to new forms of chemo-radiation treatment."



Donal Hollywood in St. Luke's TELESYNERGY® center

Throughout the two-day meeting, both the Users Group and NIH/NCI staff members participated in group discussions and breakout sessions that provided updates and highlights about TELESYNERGY®. Presentations by island and U.S. site representatives provided updates on their experiences with TELESYNERGY®. The need for expansion of the U.S. network to reach underserved populations was discussed, as were potential projects for collaboration, such as an esophageal study. The group shared their ideas about the use of the telemedicine system for educational and training purposes (including joint conferences) and for assessment of the quality of clinical outcomes. The group also discussed potential technical enhancements of the system. Telemedicine activities at the NIH Clinical Center were described during a NIH/NCI staff-led tour of the Center. The group also toured the Center for Information Technology's Computer Center.



Island Participants, along with Dr. Joe Harford, Director of NCI's Office of International Affairs, attended the first TELESYNERGY® Users Group Meeting.

Lance Liotta, Chief of the Laboratory of Pathology and Chief of the Tumor Invasion and Metastases Section in the Center for Cancer Research (NCI), briefed the group on NCI telemedicine programs and offered a tour of his laboratory. Robert Martino, Director of the Division of Computational Bioscience, provided information about his division's involvement with telemedicine and the TELESYNERGY® system. Overviews of telemedicine use in radiation oncology and clinical oncology research were also presented.

For more information and meeting presentations, visit the Consortium's Web site at www.allirelandnci.org/.

Clinical Trials Nurses Training Programme

During the fall of 2002, four nurses from Northern Ireland and Ireland completed the second round of Consortium-sponsored clinical trials training. This training focuses on a team approach to managing clinical trials, and learning about specific elements of clinical trial management. The training aims to increase the confidence level of island clinical trials nurses and provides opportunities for these nurses to observe high-level clinical research and expertise.



NCI Nursing Supervisor Joyce Stocker (center) surrounded by participants in the second round of 2002 clinical trials nursing training.

To gain work experience in other clinical trials centre settings, nurses rotated between the NCI Clinical Center and NCI's branch at the National Naval Medical Center. The visiting nurses also used this opportunity to share their expertise in palliative care with U.S. colleagues and each other. Besides their collaborative work time, the nurses spent time on tours of the metropolitan D.C. area and beyond, which helped engender lasting friendships and continuing professional interaction when the nurses returned home.

Ruth Boyd and Mairéad Devine (both from Belfast City Hospital, Belfast), Marie Cox (University College Hospital, Galway), and Louise Sherwin (St. Luke's Hospital, Dublin) completed the second round of training.

Plans for another round of training in the fall of 2003 are under development. Details will be available on the Consortium Web site (www.allirelandnci.org).

Smoking Cessation Workshop Held in Dundalk



Smoking Cessation Workshop speakers included: Front: Dr. Deirdre Kenny; Second Row: Drs. Michael Boland and Sue Curry; Next Row: Dr. Doug Weed (Moderator), Dr. Shu-Hong Zhu, and Ms. Norma Cronin; Top: Mr. Pat Purvis.

The Consortium sponsored a two-day workshop *Smoking Cessation: Current Practice and Future Directions. Developing a Research Agenda*. on May 21-22, 2003, at the Ballymascanlon Hotel in Dundalk, Ireland. Select NCI staff and Consortium Prevention Working Group members developed the content and structure of the workshop. The workshop agenda was based on the goals of establishing relationships between island and U.S. investigators and identifying areas of need to be targeted for future research collaborations.

Speakers from Ireland, Northern Ireland, and the U.S. addressed the current state of community-based cessation activities and improvement of cessation efforts targeted at low socioeconomic populations. Approximately forty participants attended the workshop. A smaller group participated in a working session the following day to prioritize issues, to identify specific areas of research collaboration that incorporate feedback and discussion, and to develop specific action plans to move forward on collaborations. Workshop reports and recommendations are available on the Consortium Web site at www.allirelandnci.org/.

First All-Island Cancer Clinical Trials Cooperative Group Launched

With Consortium Board of Directors members Drs. Henrietta Campbell (Northern Ireland), James Kiely (Ireland), and Andrew von Eschenbach (United States) in attendance, the first all-island cancer clinical trials cooperative group was formally launched on 8 February 2003 at the Royal College of Surgeons in Dublin. The Belfast launch of the cooperative group took place in the Belfast City Hospital on 12 June 2003 during which Professor Sir George Radda, Chief Executive of the UK Medical Research Council and Chair of the UK National Institute for Cancer Research, praised the development of the group and emphasised the importance of collaboration in modern medical research.

The Irish Oncology Research Group (Dublin) and the Clinical Research Support Centre (Belfast) collaborated to form the coordinating body and to provide data and statistical management for a “network” of cancer centres to ensure that patients on the island have access to the latest and most effective cancer therapies. The new all-island group’s structure is based on similar U.S. cooperative groups, which have proved crucial in delivering new forms of cancer treatment.

The all-island group’s ambitious work plan includes initiation and coordination of clinical trials in cancer hospitals on the island. Over the past two years, a Consortium initiative funded nine hospitals in Ireland so that they can offer patients the opportunity to participate in high quality clinical trials. These nine hospitals, Belfast City Hospital, and four regional cancer units in the North form the cooperative group. Island collaboration with the U.S. and other



Health professionals and officials who were instrumental in the formation of the cooperative group gathered for the formal launch of the All-island Cancer Clinical Trials Cooperative Group in Dublin.

Back Row (L-R) Dr. Dermot Kelleher, HRB Board Member, Ireland. Professor Bob Stout, Director, R&D Office Northern Ireland.

Middle Row (L-R) Dr. John Armstrong, ICORG Chair. Dr. Karen Baillie, Director CRSC.

Front Row (L-R) Dr. Jim Kiely, Chief Medical Officer Department of Health & Children, Ireland. Dr. Andrew von Eschenbach, Director NCI, U.S. Dr. Ruth Barrington, Chief Executive Officer HRB, Ireland. Dr. Henrietta Campbell, Chief Medical Officer DHSSPS, Northern Ireland.



Northern Ireland health professionals and dignitaries attended the 12 June launch of the All-island Cancer Clinical Trials Cooperative Group in Belfast.

(L-R) Consortium members Professor Robert Stout and Dr. Ruth Barrington; Professor Sir George Radda; Dr. Karen Baillie, Director of the Clinical Research Support Centre; Dr. John Armstrong, Chairman of the Irish Clinical Oncology Research Group; and Consortium member Professor Patrick Johnston, Director of the NI Cancer Centre.

countries will help create a pool of participants large enough to complete trials in a reasonable amount of time.

The Health Research Board in Dublin and the Research and Development Office in Belfast are jointly funding the new cooperative group.

Consortium Welcomes New Members

Professor Mark Lawler joined the Implementation Group in September 2002. Currently the Honorary Secretary of the Irish Association for Cancer Research, he represents research scientists on the Implementation Group. He is Chairman of the St. James's Hospital Cancer Strategy Group and also directs the Cancer Molecular Diagnostics Laboratory there, the first of its type in Ireland. He has an active research group working on the molecular basis of cancer, particularly haematological malignancy. His work on chimerism and minimal residual disease has been honoured with awards such as the Ulster Cancer Foundation lecture, the Eli Lilly Prize, and the Vander Molen Prize for Leukemia Research. He is the Lead Investigator of the Cancer Programme for the Dublin Molecular Medicine Centre and a Visiting Lecturer in Human Genetics, G'D'Annunzio University of Chieti in Italy. He is both the co-ordinator of the MSc in Molecular Medicine and an Honorary Lecturer in Oncogenetics, Genetics Department, both at Trinity College Dublin. He is also Scientific Secretary of the Haematology Association of Ireland and is a member of the European Cancer Research Forum.



Dr. Mary Hynes was named as a member of the Implementation Group in April 2002. As Regional Manager of Acute Services (Western Health Board) for the Department of Public Health in Dublin, she represents four acute

hospitals and the primary care unit of the Western Health Board, which encompasses the region along Ireland's west coast and includes Galway and surrounding rural areas. She has more than 25 years experience in public health in Ireland. Working with the population as a whole in a wide range of areas from health promotion and prevention to screening, diagnosis, treatment, and palliative care, she advises the Consortium on needs such as training and infrastructure enhancement for hospitals.

UICC International Cancer Technology Transfer Fellowships

The International Union Against Cancer (UICC), an independent, international, non-governmental association, is comprised of 291 cancer-fighting member organisations representing 87 countries and covering all aspects of cancer control. The UICC promotes epidemiology and prevention; screening, early detection, and diagnosis; and a comprehensive approach to tobacco control worldwide. It also works to collect and distribute quality cancer information around the world.

UICC International Cancer Technology Transfer (ICRETT) fellowships are funded by a group consisting of cancer institutes, which includes the National Cancer Institute; cancer societies, leagues, and associations; and governmental agencies in North America, Europe, and Australia. These short-term fellowships (up to 3 months) are intended for investigators and clinicians working in countries where courses are not available but where new skills can be applied upon return. Experts from any country are eligible to apply; however, the NCI's Office of International Affairs will provide exceptional funding for Irish and Northern Irish participants. Applications are particularly encouraged for projects in cancer control and prevention; epidemiology and cancer registration; public education; and behavioural sciences. Visit the UICC Web site's page on ICRETT fellowships at fellows.uicc.org/fell4icr.shtml for details and application information.



All-Ireland Cancer Care Conference 19-22 October 2003 Cork

Multidisciplinary conference for U.S. and island cancer care/research communities

- Opportunities to meet with international cancer experts
- Updates on recent developments in cancer care/research
- Forum for exchange of views and ideas

Conference Web site

www.conferencepartners.ie/cancer2003/

What's Next

New Fellowship Programmes (under the auspices of the Consortium)—details to be posted at www.allirelandnci.org/

Collaborative Fellowships for Island Cancer Prevention Researchers: New level of support for island cancer researchers to participate in the Cancer Prevention Fellowship Program at the NCI

Joint Research Project Fellowships: Competitive Consortium-sponsored fellowships that support island Research Fellows collaborating with a self-assembled multinational team on defined cancer research projects of mutual interest

All-Ireland Cancer Conference-19-22 October 2003 in Cork

Call for abstract submissions for poster presentations

Conference Web site: www.conferencepartners.ie/cancer2003/

Second All-Ireland Cancer Incidence and Mortality Report (Fall 2004)



**IRELAND-NORTHERN
IRELAND-NATIONAL CANCER
INSTITUTE**

*Cancer
Consortium*

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Announcements

Dr. Douglas L. Weed's article *Cancer Prevention and the All-Ireland NCI Cancer Consortium* was published in the December 2002 Journal of Health Promotion for Northern Ireland. Dr. Weed is Chair of the Consortium's Prevention Working Group, and Dean, Education and Training, Division of Cancer of Prevention, National Cancer Institute. He also directs the Cancer Prevention Fellowship Program at NCI. A reprint of the article is available in the Prevention section of the Consortium's Web site at www.allirelandnci.org/programs/prev.asp.

Dr. Deirdre Cronin, a molecular biologist from Ireland, recently arrived in the U.S. for the first year of a three-year Consortium-sponsored epidemiology fellowship. Prior to this, she had a four-month assignment at the National Cancer Registry of Ireland (Cork).

Joe Campo of the Washington State (U.S.) Cancer Registry will begin a one-year research fellowship on the island to produce the Second All-Ireland Cancer Incidence and Mortality Report, a jointly funded project of the Department of Health and Children (Ireland) and the Department of Health Social Services and Public Safety (Northern Ireland). Publication of the report is expected by fall 2004.

Island health professionals will attend two separate summer prevention courses—*Principles and Practice of Cancer Prevention* and *Control and Molecular Prevention*—at the NCI in July and August.